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Die Kreis- und Provinzial-Ordnungen des Preussischen Staates (für die östlichen Provinzen, sowie für Hannover, Hessen-Nassau u. Westfalen) nebst den Dotationsgesetzen. Synoptische Ausgabe mit erläuternden Anmerkungen von CONRAD BORNHAK. Berlin, J. J. Heines Verlag, 1887. — iv, 280 pp.

Die Kommunalverwaltung. Sammlung praktischer Handbücher für den kommunalen Verwaltungsdienst. Zusammengestellt von H. STEFFENHAGEN. Berlin, J. J. Heines Verlag, 1887.

The great reform in the local government of Prussia, the foundation for which was laid in the beginning of the century by the legislation of Stein and Hardenberg and the successful completion of which has been due pre-eminently to the writings of Professor Gneist and the political sagacity of Prince Bismarck, has led, among other things, to the multiplication of little handbooks on local government and administration. The books whose titles are given above are of this class. Intended in the main for the use of local officers, they contain so much detailed information that no thorough student of German local institutions can well afford to be without them. The book of Mr. Bornhak, whose work on the history of Prussian administrative law has already been noticed in the *QUARTERLY*, gives with a running commentary the texts of the various laws, dating from about 1872, which govern the organization of the province and of the circle — the administrative division corresponding to our county. On account of the different circumstances of the various provinces, it has been necessary to pass separate laws, differing somewhat in details, for each province or group of provinces; and Mr. Bornhak has therefore adopted the plan of placing under each section of his work the articles of all the laws relating to the particular subject or of indicating briefly the differences between the various laws. In his commentary, he cites all the important decisions of the courts made in the interpretation and construction of the laws. In an introduction, he gives a clear and concise history of the reform legislation which his little work is intended to present and to elucidate. This account is of material assistance to a right understanding of the reform.

Die Kommunalverwaltung is a work of the same character. That is, it is a compilation of the various laws passed in Prussia for the government of the cities and townships. Its arrangement, however, is different from that of *Die Kreis- und Provinzial-Ordnungen*, and it is on that account less useful to the foreign student; for each province is treated separately and indeed in a separate volume. The series is composed of five little volumes devoted to the various municipal corporation acts of the different provinces and groups of provinces; one

volume concerning the instructions issued to the city executive authorities by the central government; and two volumes devoted respectively to the administration of the poor law and to the county townships in the province of Westphalia. Each volume contains notes by the compiler in explanation of the laws treated.

These books are little more than reprints of the laws with explanations of obscure points. They do not attempt a scientific discussion of the various subjects set forth; but they are convenient in size, and will be found extremely useful in studying the present local institutions of Prussia.

FRANK J. GOODNOW.

La France sous l'ancien régime. Par le vicomte DE BROC.
Paris, E. Plon, Nourrit et Cie, 1887. — 8vo, 424 pp.

The subject which the Vicomte de Broc has chosen is not a novel one, but it is of the greatest importance and the greatest interest. Though much has been written on the condition and the government of France during the eighty years before the Revolution, that period is hazy in the minds of most English readers. The dramatic annals of the Revolution are familiar, but the conditions which slowly led up to the most important event in modern times have received but little study from English scholars. They possess a charm for all who care to read of a brilliant society which has perished from the earth, and a value for all who wish to learn the lessons which history has to teach.

The present is the result of all the past, and the long progress of the French monarchy had its influence on the final overthrow; yet in the years that followed the death of Louis XIV we can trace the immediate causes of the downfall of that ancient government. When the "grand monarque" died, it was not too late so to reform the administration that the Bourbons should have become constitutional rulers over a prosperous and contented people. When Louis XVI ascended the throne, fifty-nine years later, social conditions had so shaped themselves, political traditions and religious beliefs had so altered, that the endeavors of an amiable king to improve the lot of his people only hastened his own ruin.

France became what Metternich called an intermittent monarchy, and now, for nearly twenty years, she has been a republic. The most ardent democrat can not claim that her republican government has been in all respects successful. Its temporary errors do not, indeed, prove that it is doomed to final failure. The republic found France suffering under the most disastrous defeat which she had experienced since the fall of the first Napoleon — a defeat for which no parallel could be found in her annals during the three hundred and fifty years preceding the Revolu-